



Clearcreek Chapel
June 13, 2004
Michael McDonald

Title: “Do I Look Angry to You!”

Primary Text: James 4:1-10

Purpose: 1) To warn the believer of the deceit and desires of the heart that produce anger and 2) to show the unbeliever the separation from God that is exemplified by an angry heart.

I. Introduction:

- I can't believe he thinks he can talk to me that way.
- Who does she think she is to tell me how to raise my kids?
- Well he is just stupid if he thinks I am going to let him take the credit for this project.
- I hate the way he looks at me; he looks at me as though I was the one that is at fault.
- Hey! Get out of my way and watch where you are going!
- What are you looking at? I am not angry! What “Do I look angry to you!”?

This is a stream of conscience that flows through the mind and into actions that is easily recognized as anger. There is nothing good about this anger; it is malicious in every way. This anger is often described as a fluid, like hydraulic fluid that builds up pressure until it just can't be contained any longer. It then bursts out and douses everyone nearby with evil and vile words or physical violence, both of which hurt and harm people. This anger can range from sharp but infrequent jabs or an all out eruption of emotional and physical violence. It can also be hidden in the heart where only God can see. We are often encouraged by the world to relieve the pressure of anger to feel better. Hit a pillow. Relieve some of the pressure. One cannot escape anger. Anger is something you have or someone causes you to have. Anger can only be managed. After all anger is a right or a privilege that one has towards an offender.

As I read and prepare for this sermon I became ever so convinced of the seriousness of anger, not only what we can see, but also what we cannot see. The stream of consciousness that is kept in the confines of one's mind is just as serious. I was also surprised out how many of my thoughts and beliefs about anger were molded in some way by the world's concepts of anger.



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Anger is just not a fluid or a feeling that builds up pressure until it explodes, but anger is a conscious and premeditated act based on one's beliefs. Yes, if we are angry, then we have chosen to be that way. That also means we can choose not to be angry.

Do you recognize the description of anger that I have given so far? Have you been able to identify with the stream of conscience that was provided? If I haven't gained your attention so far then I plan to with this quote from scripture **"Proverbs 22:24-25 Make no friendship with a man given to anger, nor go with a wrathful man, [25] lest you learn his ways and entangle yourself in a snare."** In other words, if you're an angry person, then I need to be careful of you. I need to be careful not to get entangled in the same sin that you are in. Anger is serious, so much that God warns of those who are given to anger. Scripture says Beware!

A. Types of Anger

There are several categories of anger that are mentioned in Scripture. There is good anger. For example, anger of God towards an idolatrous people is an example of Divine Anger. Anger of a person towards a person for their sin against God as described in Eph. 4:26 is an example of Godly anger. ("Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger,"). There is good and Godly anger that is rooted and grounded in a desire for God and produces righteousness. Neither of these is the type of anger that we are talking about.

However, there is anger, either toward God and or towards people that is sin. This is the category of anger that we will look closely at so that we can please God, find joy in Him, and live peacefully with our neighbor.

B. Definition of Anger

How do you define anger? Have you thought about a working definition of anger before? Let me give you a couple of options.

1) Anger is "the incredible urge to choke the living daylights out of someone who desperately deserves it"?

or



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2) Anger is “a passion that wages in our souls and that is managed through careful attention and restraints”?

or

3) Anger is “a whole-persons response arising from a negative moral judgment against perceived evil”?

This third definition is the definition derived from scripture and taught in our Counseling Training Class. This definition demonstrates that:

- 1) anger is an activity, it is not a thing or a fluid,
- 2) anger is a volitional response to something, it is not a necessary response but response that we chose; it is something you do and not something you have or have caught
- 3) anger is a response of the whole-person (both the heart and the body),
- 4) anger results from a moral judgment and
- 5) anger arises from our personal perception of what is evil.

Did you ever think that anger could be so diagnostic and condemning of what is going on in the heart?

In this sermon we will examine anger through the eyes of James. James was writing his letter to 12 tribes. These tribes included both believers and unbelievers. James addresses both believers and unbelievers in this letter as he volleys back and forth between a) the evidence of true faith of a believer and the b) evidence of a lack of faith in the unbeliever. This manifests itself as a series of challenges like “do you have wisdom from above or wisdom from the world”.

As we look to the root of anger we will see that anger separates the believer from their joy in Christ. We will also see that anger exemplifies the separation that an unbeliever has with Christ and convicts him of his sin.

Read Text: James 4:1-10 What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? [2] You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. [3] You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. [4] You adulterous people! Do you



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not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. [5] Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, "He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us"? [6] But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble." [7] Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. [8] Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. [9] Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. [10] Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

Prayer

II. The Root of Anger (vs. 1-3)

As we noted earlier, anger can be Godly or evil. In the same way, passion can be Godly or evil. For example, there is the passion for God that produces endless joy and then there is the passion for wickedness that urges one to ponder and contemplate new ways of sin. The passion is not the root of anger, but it is often mistaken for the root since it is what people feel as the burning fire that wages war in them. Note that the passage does not say that it is the passions that cause the war, but that the passions are at war. The root of anger is deeper than passion. The root of anger goes back to those moral judgments and whole body responses that come from one's desires and their belief in lies. In verse 2 the desire is given specifically, the desire for something you do not have. In other words, coveting what someone else has or just something you don't have is the root of the sin of anger. The second component is the belief in lies. The lie that is exemplified in the text is that these peoples actually believe that they deserve to have what they want. In other words they have desires that are so strong for something that they are willing to believe that what they want should actually be theirs. This is something familiar to us. These circumstances are the basis for many advertisements today. If you want it then you must deserve it. This goes back to something James was addressing in Chapter 3:14. James 3:14 But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. In other words don't let the jealousy and selfish ambition sway you to believe lies. We must be committed to truth, seeking truth, and rooting out lies.

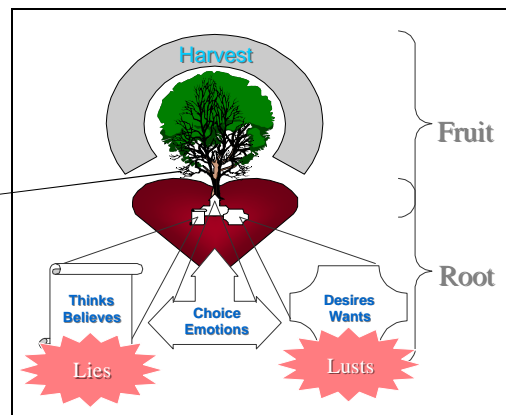


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The model presented in chapter 4 for desires and wants is reminiscent of the heart model. The heart model is a picture that the bible puts forth of what happens in our hearts and souls. I am going to flash the heart model by you, and I want to challenge each one that you memorize and now this in enough detail that you can use it in your self-counsel and share it as you counsel those around you.

Heart Model

The heart is what we refer to as the soul and the mind. The scriptures often refer to this as the inner man. The soul contemplates what is going on around and chooses to believe in truth or lies. The belief in lies proves to be justification for going after the sinful desires and wants of the heart. At the same time the fleshly desires help to create the lies. Our emotions and our passions are in the middle of what we think and what we believe to be true and what we desire and want. Actions based on our beliefs and our desires produce fruit. The fruit is either good or bad depending on what we believe and what we want.



The questions that are prompted by verse 3 that we need to ask ourselves is “what do you believe?” and “what do you want?” Do you believe that there is no greater joy, hope, satisfaction, or pleasure than pursuing God? Do you want that? The text suggests that the one with the angry heart believes that pursuing revenge, evil, hatred, things, or people is greater than pursuing our all satisfying God. What do you believe to be true when you are sinfully angry? What is that you want when you feel the pressure of your passions building up inside you?



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III. The Fruit of Anger (vs 4-5)

God's view of anger helps focus our attention on the problem and the solution. How does God view this kind of anger? In God's eye's the fruit of anger is God seeing you as an adulterous people who make friends with the world and sell-out true joy in the all-satisfying God for an empty satisfaction of anger. The seriousness of this sell-out is to become at odds with God by being His enemy. Listen to the word.

James 4:4 You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

Let me first present the angry Christian. The Christian has a faith that is alive and a heart that wants to follow God, but there is the replacement, even a habitual replacement, of the Joy in God for their moment of anger. There is the occasion of not getting their way that provides an occasion for them to pursue anger instead of contentment. There is the occasion when Godly submission is the course of action, but the passion for being in authority drives one to pursue anger instead of humility. If this is you, then repent. Repent of seeking something other than God. Repent of believing lies. Repent of going after sinful desires. Repent and be reconciled to God.

The seriousness of this is stressed even more in verse 5 where the reference is to an unbelieving person, a person that is bent on lusting after evil. That is to say, that the person is bent on anger. The person will seek out reasons to be angry. Their view of what is going on around them begins to be distorted and they might even develop a view that everyone is out to hurt them, or criticize them, or to take what they desire. They are bent on being angry and they do not pursue God. This person is at war with God and does not believe that God is their greatest joy. They do not believe that they need salvation from their sins. They do not believe and are therefore separated from God because of their unbelief. If this is you, then repent. Repent of seeking something other than God. Repent of believing lies. Repent of going after sinful desires. Repent of your sin, ask God for forgiveness and be reconciled to Him. This is the only way that you can end your war with God. The fruit of believing in God and desiring Him is the fruits of happiness, joy, and peace. Sinful anger can be removed.



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IV. The Grace of God to the Humble (vs 6-8)

If anger describes you as the believer or you as the unbeliever, then what should you do? The way to be free of anger and to be at peace with God is found in verse 6.

James 4:6 But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

The passage continues to build more hope, a close relationship with God, clean hands, pure hearts, and freedom from the chains of sin. This is all accomplished through His grace.

The only ray of hope to be free is through His grace. It is through His grace that we see our need for Him and repent, it is through His grace that we overcome the weight of sin, it is through His grace that we get a new heart, and it is through His great that we are no longer angry. It is through His grace that we forgive a horrible sin committed against us. And yes this is all possible through His grace.

V. The Brokenness of True Repentance (vs 9-10)

The final plea of this message is for you and me to be broken due to sin.

James 4:9-10 Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. [10] Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

The way to God is through a true and sincere brokenness that the weight of sin produces. The weight is heavy, the weight is nagging, the weight is unbearable, and you cannot remove the weight. The brokenness that comes from the proper view of sin provides the humbleness to approach God. In humility you and I should seek His forgiveness of sin. The broken and humble heart that approaches God will not be turned away. We are told of this in other passages as well.

2 Cor. 7:10 For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death.



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It is possible that the weight of anger is heavy. You may even feel that you don't know anything but anger. That is just the way I am now. I don't know how to be happy or at peace. Humble yourself before God and seek His forgiveness and peace can be yours.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

So the person who finds himself or herself bent on lusting after anger need only repent of their sin and be united with God.

VI. Challenge

The challenge that comes forth from this text is at the heart level. There is no way for any of us to escape these challenges.

Does anger wage war inside you? Be very critical so that you are not deceived.

Are you waging wars with God or with others? The standard here is scripture and the counsel from others can help you see what you do not see.

What are the lies that you believe when you are angry? If you come away with none, you might want to get someone else's opinion.

What do you desire in your anger? What is it that you want so bad that you are willing to sin to get it?

What do you believe to be the source of joy, happiness, hope, and peace? Another way to say this is what occupies your mind most of all.

What do you need to repent of and seek God's forgiveness and also the forgiveness of those around you?